

**MONTANA
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January 12, 2009

Montana American Indian Caucus
61st Session of the Montana Legislature

To: Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications Committee
Fr: Montana American Indian Caucus
Re: House Bill 162, Sponsored by Rep. J. David Roundstone

Dear Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications Committee Members:

The Montana American Indian Caucus of the 61st Session of the Montana State Legislature supports and urges the passage of House Bill 162 (HB162) sponsored by Rep. J. David Roundstone.

HB162 would remove the 7% limitation of Coal Board grant money allocated to Indian tribes, and allow for more funding to be appropriated to Tribes—primarily the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Tribes—that are seeking to improve the conditions of underdeveloped tribal communities. The passage of HB162 would also benefit cumulative development in and around reservation communities, and includes projects under the following categories: Housing and Neighborhood Renewal, Public Facilities, Planning Grants, Economic Development projects, and the Montana Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

We strongly encourage the House FRET Committee to consider the benefits that HB162 would provide to Indian Tribes that have been historically hampered by continuous obstacles. Some of these barriers to progressive development include high unemployment rates, a scarcity of jobs, inadequate housing, underdeveloped tribal infrastructures, and limited resources. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of the Montana American Indian Caucus's position regarding HB162, and look forward to the support and passage of this initiative. Thank you.

Sincerely,

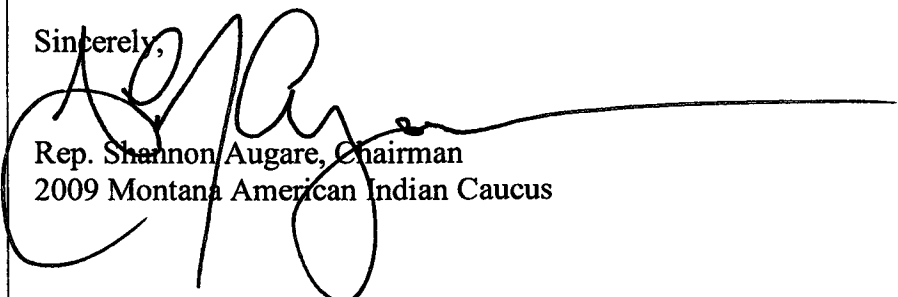

Rep. Shannon Augare, Chairman
2009 Montana American Indian Caucus

EXHIBIT 9
DATE 1-12-09
HB 162